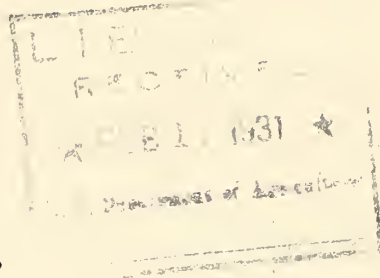


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Excerpt from the radio talk by
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How To Read The Label

Canned Berries

What are the label requirements with respect to canned berries and what should a consumer know about them in order to buy intelligently?

The consumer should know that the Government standard for canned fruit calls for the clean, sound product made from properly prepared fresh fruit with or without water and sugar. It may be processed in a hermetically sealed container, or first cooked and then packed in a container after which it is hermetically sealed.

The bulk of the berries in the western part of the United States are produced in the Pacific Northwest. The grades established by the Northwest Cannery Association may be said to be representative for Oregon and Washington berries. The principal berries canned are loganberries, red raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, cranberries, blackberries and black raspberries. In the packing process, cans are filled as full as practicable with berries and the spaces between the individual berries filled with sugar sirup or water. The strength of sugar sirup varies with grade.

There are five general grades for all but loganberries under the Northwest Cannery Association specifications. They are, "Fancy", "Choice", "Standard", "Seconds", and "Water", or "Pie", as it is sometimes termed. In loganberries, the "Standard" and "Seconds" grades are omitted, the "Water" or "Pie" grade follows the "Choice".

(1) "Fancy" red raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and cranberries are packed in 60% sugar sirup solution; the "Choice" grade in 40% sugar sirup solution; the "Standard" grade in 20% sugar sirup solution, and the "Seconds" in 10% sugar sirup solution. The "Water" or "Pie" grade is a water pack. The "Fancy" grade requires berries of very fine quality, free from blemishes, and uniform in size.

(2) The "Choice" grade requires the use of ripe berries of fine quality, free from blemishes and uniform in size. Except for sirup strength, the difference between "Choice" and "Fancy" grades is largely one of symmetry and workmanship and perhaps color of fruit.

(3) In general, the "Standard" grade can be said to contain berries of good quality, reasonably free from blemishes, and reasonably uniform in size and degree of ripeness.

(4) One ordinarily sees little of the "Seconds", and the "Water" or "Pie" fruit. It is that material generally packed in No. 10 or large tins. Usually, berries entering these grades contain minor blemishes, some berries are over-ripe, and some are immature. It is all wholesome fruit but not so uniform in size or appearance as the preceding grades.

The same grades, names and descriptions apply to blackberries and black raspberries except that different strength of sugar sirups are employed. For example, the "Fancy" grade requires but a 40% sugar sirup, the "Choice" a 30% sugar sirup, the "Standards" a 20% sugar sirup and the "Seconds" a 10% sugar sirup.

In the case of loganberries, the "Fancy" grade takes a 70% sugar sirup and the "Choice" a 50%. Ordinarily, no intermediate grades between "Choice" loganberries and "Water" loganberries are packed.

As is the case with other canned fruits, the packers and distributors do not always tell you upon the labels which of their products are of "Fancy", "Choice", or "Standard" grades. The "Fancy" grade is that generally found under the leading or first brand of packers and distributors. You will find cans of berries well filled with fruit because your Food and Drug Administration holds as adulterated such packs as contain more water or sirup than is necessary for the product's proper preparation and sterilization.

On berry labels, you may read such phrases as "Solid Pack Fruit", "Solid Pack", "Extra Heavy Pack". As far as I know, all canned berry packs today produced contain added water or sirup sufficient to fill the spaces between the individual berries. Properly speaking, the term, "Solid Pack Berries", requires a slight precooking of the fruit before placing it in the container, thus eliminating the necessity of adding any water or sirup. This practice is not followed.

I should tell you that the canned blackberries of the Northwest and the blueberries of Maine are wild berries, not cultivated, and, further, most of the blackberries produced in the Pacific Northwest are the "Evergreen" wild blackberries.

Loganberries, or logan-blackberries, as they are sometimes called, are believed to be a variety of the trailing blackberry, common to the Pacific Coast. For a long time, the loganberry was supposed to be a cross between the blackberry and the red Antwerp raspberry.